

## Other Business

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of September 22, 2021

**Subject:** Establish the Climate Work Group and Appoint Members

**District(s), Member(s):** All

**Policy/Legal Reference:** Bylaws of the Metropolitan Council, art. III.C.

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Charles A. Zelle, Chair, 651-602-1390

**Division/Department:** Chair's Office

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve Chair Zelle's recommendation to:

1. Establish an internal advisory Climate Work Group through December 31, 2022.
2. Appoint the following members to serve on the work group: Peter Lindstrom, Chair; Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson; Deb Barber; Chai Lee; Susan Vento; and Raymond Zeran.

### Background

For many years, the Council has been working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce energy use, and provide technical assistance to local governments to implement climate-related actions. In its Strategic Plan (2020-2022), the Council identified as an objective the development of an "agency-wide sustainability plan," referred to as the Climate Action Plan, that includes the following direction:

1. Develop emissions and infrastructure targets and goals for Council wastewater, transit, and general operations, such as resource recovery, energy consumption, and treatment capacity.
2. Develop direction and strategies integrating the Council's climate-related research and analysis to support future regional planning efforts.
3. Integrate climate-adaptation goals and strategies into the Council's operations, infrastructure investments, and regional planning principles.
4. Identify and implement actions for meeting and exceeding air and water quality standards.
5. Research the role of the regional parks and open space system in mitigating climate change and contributing to a more resilient region.

At the Committee of the Whole meeting on April 21, 2021, at which Council staff provided an update on the progress of the plan development, several Council Members expressed support for the establishment of a work group that would help guide the development of the plan.

### Work Group Purpose

The Climate Work Group is intended to provide a forum for Council Members to work with Council staff on guiding the development and implementation of the Climate Action Plan, including:

- Identifying opportunities for Council Member, partner agency, and public engagement
- Identifying areas in the plan where more investigation or discussion is needed
- Identifying barriers to implementing impactful strategies and potential solutions to overcome those barriers
- Guiding and monitoring progress of Climate Action Plan development and implementation

- Identifying emerging climate change issues and strategies for the Council's consideration

### **Rationale**

The establishment of this internal advisory Climate Work Group will guide staff related to the above issues and will help identify additional topics for exploration as they emerge. This group will not make any formal decisions. Discussion on various decision points of plan development will be conducted in the standing committees of the Council where appropriate as well as meetings of the full Council. The Climate Action Plan will be presented to the governing body of the Council for its review and adoption.

### **Thrive Lens Analysis**

The Climate Work Group will take an integrated approach to the Council Climate Action Plan, including representation from each of the Council's standing committees and thinking holistically about how the Council approaches its climate action work to further these outcomes on an agency-wide basis. The Climate Work Group will improve the Council's ability to advance the policies and outcomes identified in *Thrive MSP 2040* and the direction in the Council's Strategic Plan as they relate to Sustainability.

### **Funding**

The Council allocated funding to facilitate the development of the Climate Action Plan as part of the annual budget. The Executive Director of the Community Development Division and the Climate Action Plan Project Management Team will provide primary staff support of the Climate Work Group as part of their regular work and no additional funding is needed at this time.

### **Known Support / Opposition**

Several Council members expressed support for establishing a Climate Work Group to support the development of the Climate Action Plan at the Committee of the Whole meeting on April 21, 2021.